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IN THE
DESERTED VILLAGES
OF
GUJARAT

BY
REV. FR. VERRIER ELWIN

Price 2 Ans.

FOREWORD

A few friends of the Bombay International Fellowship have felt the desirability of giving wider publicity to this simple, unvarnished report of things, seen at first hand by an Englishman to whom has been given "the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." They send it forth in the hope that all things work for good for them that believe.

P. A. WADIA

one who knew my companions could suspect them of either exaggerating or concealing facts. They were men devoted to the ideal of truth which Gandhiji has held aloft as the guide and inspiration of all life; and they realised that exaggerated stories, which could easily be disproved, did the greatest harm to the National Movement. I claim indeed that what I am now to relate may be accepted as an accurate account of actual facts. I shall begin with a description of what I saw in the Anand and Nadiad Talukas, dividing what I have to say under different heads.

The Talukas of Nadiad and Anand

THE Nadiad and Anand Talukas lie to the south of the city of Ahmedabad and are bounded on one side by the territory of the Gaekwad of Baroda. The No-Tax Campaign was recently started in this district and Government has taken strong measures to counter it, by general propaganda, by the ordinary processes of attachment, by giving extraordinary powers to Revenue Officers, and—it is alleged—by a policy of terrorism and repression. Many of these allegations, to my great regret,—for I am an Englishman who is a real lover of the country of his birth—I found to be true, as the following record will indicate.

1. *Allegations of Beating and Insult.*

We examined witnesses in the villages of Salun, Piplav, Ajarpur and Thamna, the town of Nadiad, and emigrants in three camps in Baroda Territory, and found over-whelming and consistent evidence of severe beating and the grossest insult and abuse.

I select the following examples out of 40 pages of notes:

At Salun, I saw an elderly man in a most distressing condition; one of his ribs was damaged: he was terribly bruised, weak and exhausted, coughing and vomiting. He had refused to pay his land revenue. On the morning of November 26th the police came to his field, demanded the tax and then gave him a severe beating on the charge that a stolen safe was hidden in his hay-stack. Four neighbours who refused to help in the removal of the hay-stack were beaten also. He was taken to the police lock-up, but his condition became so alarming that he was sent back at midnight to his relations.

At Piplav, we talked with a fine old man of 65 years, who was given two slaps on the face by the Sub-Inspector himself. We were told how an attachment party beat the

His children, but as I talked with these two women, so infinitely pathetic in the garments of their widowhood, defenceless and unprotected, I thought I could see in them my own mother, and I wondered what I should feel if my quiet Oxford home were broken open, and my mother and sister assaulted and insulted by the police.

ii. Methods of Making Attachments.

The villagers who take part in the No-Tax Campaign are fully prepared for part of their goods to be attached by fair and legal means. The rules of this form of "warfare" are contained in the Land Revenue Code, which clearly exempts from attachment certain articles necessary to the life of the villager and the good of the soil; for example, ploughs, cattle, agricultural implements (among which are reckoned pumps for irrigation purposes) and necessary household articles are not taken.

We found, however, that the rules of the game were not being observed. In the first place, Government, profiting by its experiences in the Bardoli struggle of 1928, has ante-dated the collection of the land-tax, to the real embarrassment of the farmers. We found many cases in which necessary articles have been attached; goods are often undervalued and underweighed; they are sometimes sold for a tithe of their real value. It is true that it is hard to find bidders for confiscated property, but it is only fair that this should be assessed, not at what it will fetch under the present abnormal conditions, but at what it is worth. Again, if the revenue officers cannot recover the tax from the proper source, they will bully the neighbours, sometimes even strangers, and try to take it from them. Here are some examples:

At Piplav, a large number of house pots and cooking vessels appear to have been attached. At Narsunda, over Rs. 100/- worth damage was done to one house; the iron sheets of the roof, the doors, and the beautifully carved door-frame being removed. At Ajarpura, on December 7th, the police visited the village and beat a number of people. Some were ordered to remove the National Flag that was flying

on a tree in the village square and when they refused to do so, they were beaten. Some Gandhi caps were burnt.

The village having been prepared by this police raid, the Mamlatdar arrived two days later to make attachments. In order to force the farmers to pay up the tax, he removed the essential parts of four large pumps used for irrigation purposes, and naturally when the crops began to wither and ruin stared them in the face, the owners of the pumps had to yield. Even so one farmer had to pay on behalf of several others, and he was insulted and beaten by the Mamlatdar and his officers.

In this way, by illegal attachment and abuse, part of the land revenue is being collected.

In Boriavi there lives a very respected Patidar, who has received honours from Government. He has recently resigned his title and gone to jail. There is a fine of Rs. 250 against him, which he has not paid. On October 30th the police visited his house, broke open the door and removed a number of things. Not satisfied with this they invaded the house of his brother's widow (who has an entirely separate establishment) and entered the kitchen. There was no man in the house, and women were about to dine. The police ransacked everything, spilt the oil and *ghee*, polluted the drinking vessels, threw away the cooked food, and removed a number of articles and Rs. 12-9-0 in cash.

In the village, a quantity of grain, utensils, tobacco and crops were attached, and valued at about half the real price. 33 maunds of grain were entered in the inventory as 25. Bajeri was valued at Re. 1 instead of at Re. 1-8-0 or Rs. 1-10-0, the usual price.

III Other Incidents of "Terrorisation."

A common way of putting pressure on the farmers is for the police to threaten to bring charges of theft, incendiarism etc., against them unless they pay their taxes. I have several examples of this in my note-book.

Even the doctors are being terrorised. At Nadiad (I was informed on good authority) orders have been issued to Assistant Surgeons that no wounded are to be treated without the permission of the police. The man who was beaten at Salun, for example, told us that the local doctors did not dare to treat him unless he was willing to state that he got his rib broken as the result of a fall from a tree.

THE MIGRATION

It was a strange experience to visit the village of Doriavi. A month ago it was a populous, busy, happy town; the children were going to school; the women were at their daily task; the cattle wandered to and fro in the streets. But the people were filled with the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi. Prosperity, property, comfort were as nothing without freedom. Nearly all the big householders entered the No-Tax Campaign. Then came the police; and with the police insults and beatings. After one night of terror, in which the women suffered with the men, fifty families left the village and migrated to the well governed, peaceful territory of Baroda. When I visited the village, the streets were bare and empty; nearly every one of the big houses was locked up; the schools were closed. When I remembered how deeply rooted in every heart is the sentiment of property, how all men love the homes in which they have grown up, I was amazed at the patriotism and determination of the villagers.

The migration camps have frequently been described in the press. I was greatly impressed by the splendid spirit of the farmers, their courage, their endurance, their determination; above all, their wonderful happiness.

I want to stress the fact that there is no question of "poor unsophisticated rustics" being exploited by the Congress. These Patidars are very well able to look after themselves. They are fully informed about the political situation; they know what the results of their actions are likely to be, and they are mostly substantial farmers, who would not embark on a dangerous line of action with their eyes shut. It would

be hard for any one to exploit a people so strong of will and so determined.

This is only a part of what I saw in the Nadiad and Anand Talukas. I could extend my list of examples indefinitely. I have only included those which I was able to investigate for myself and which seemed to me to be true. I have the names of all the witnesses in my note-book.

I realise that in a campaign of this sort there must be suffering. Property will be confiscated ; there will be fines, imprisonments. But there are certain principles of justice and humanity which must be observed. I am willing to believe the very best of the officials ; that Mamlatdars and Sub-Inspectors are greatly provoked ; that policemen are rough and ignorant ; that the higher authorities do not realise all that is going on. But that is all the more reason why Government should immediately institute a joint enquiry into all these things. I have seen clear evidence of a policy of repression that goes beyond the bounds of justice, and it must stop.

I would ask any Englishman who reads these pages to try and imagine what he would feel if this tale of beating and insult had come from the villages in the Cotswolds or the English Lakes. Surely humanity is one ; and we should feel the sufferings even of an unknown Indian peasant as if he were our own brother.



Burnt houses at Seipur (p. 11)



Aid route Street, 11/1/50 p

II

The Borsad Taluka

THE general conditions prevailing in the Borsad Taluka are not unlike those in Anand and Nadiad. The land is fertile, and bears rich crops of jowar, bajri, paddy, tobacco, kodra, etc. The villages are large and present a prosperous appearance with their fine houses and large tanks. The different communities live together, on the whole, with real friendliness. The Patidars are the owners of the land and they have a great reputation for agricultural ability. There are very few Brahmins, some Moslems, Parsis, a sprinkling of Baniyas in the towns; the chief secondary communities are the virile Dharalas, the Barias (who come of Rajput stock) and the Patenwadias, who may be described as "civilised Bhils", a war-like tribe who have come down from the North of Gujarat.

Perhaps such origins account for the fact that Kaira District has long enjoyed the reputation of providing more dacoities, murders, and other crimes than any of the 27 districts in the province. Ten years ago it was the prolific home of crime and violence. To-day, it is a transformed country. First awakened by the Police Tax Satyagraha of 1923, the people have slowly but certainly imbibed the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. Since the present movement began, their record has been magnificent. For the past year, the non-co-operators have scarcely a single act of violence to their discredit.

Our party spent three strenuous days touring the Taluka. It is not too much to say that a reign of terror holds sway over these quiet villages and fields. We saw old men scarcely able to walk who had been belaboured by the police; again and again we stood by the charred ruins of what once had been happy prosperous homes; we heard many stories of the confiscation of essential implements outside the provisions of the Land Revenue Code; we passed through village after village, silent and deserted through

fear of the police *zulam*; we interviewed newly appointed Mukhis (village headmen) of rascally antecedents who did not know their job; and we heard much evidence of a "Divide and Rule" policy that was setting one community against another.

I have over 80 pages of notes taken first-hand in the villages themselves, with the names of all the witnesses we examined. Out of these, I will take a few characteristic examples.

(a) Cases of Beating.

In Khanpur Camp we talked with an old frail man, bowed down by age and weakness, of at least 70 years. This was his story, simply and quietly told. "I owe revenue of Rs. 26. On the night of November 6th I was sleeping in my field, guarding my crops, when a Circle Inspector, with police, came and began to beat me, demanding payment. When I refused, they took me to the village, and all along the way they were beating me. They took me to Sejpur and kept me there all night, now and then beating me. The whole of the next day I was kept there, nothing to eat all day, and nothing to cover me at night. At last they let me go. That night my brother's house, in which I live, was burnt to the ground."

Here is another story, told us beneath the canvas roofs of Gandhinagar, where the villagers of Ras are camped, by a man of 45 years who, having failed to pay the tax, was taken to the Police Head-quarters and assaulted by a Circle Inspector and three policemen. "I was made to stand and hold my toes, and in that position I was caned. The total number of blows was hundred. I was specially struck on the toes and fingers. All the time they were saying, You want Swaraj; here it is. The Inspector threatened to burn me alive and throw me into the river. I was detained for 34 hours without any food or water. But a policeman gave me water secretly."

At the Joshikuva Camp, we heard the now notorious story of the invasion of Baroda Territory by a British police force, the surrounding of the Camp, the indiscriminate

beating of the people, and the insults hurled at the Gaekwad. Here a woman was given *lathi* blows on the face and shoulder and knocked to the ground. At Kavitha, I saw an old man of 70 who was flogged by the Mamlatdar of Borsad, knocked down, and kicked in the back. In Piplav and Isnao, there was a Police raid, in which 17 people were beaten. The police entered the library of Piplav, removed photographs of Mahatma Gandhi and Tilak, broke open the cupboard, and burnt three national flags in the street. Here also, on December 7th, a widow was beaten while going to her field with her niece and daughter. Two policemen, without warning, started to beat her with the butt-end of their rifles, asking her to pay up money.

(b) Confiscation of Goods.

The confiscation of goods is a recognised method of recovering the land revenue. But there are certain rules governing these confiscations, and these rules are being widely abused. One of the worst forms which this abuse has taken is the removal of the essential parts of pumps (as has happened in at least three villages) which involves enormous loss in the ruin of crops.

(c) The Burning of Houses.

One of the most inexplicable mysteries in Borsad Taluka is the widespread outbreak of fires, through which many beautiful houses have been ruined. There are some curious facts about these fires. The houses in every case belong to people who have not paid their revenue. The local authorities have made no attempt to discover the culprits, and are indignant if one suggests that they should do so. In several cases, the local authorities tried to prevent the flames being extinguished. At Kharapur, for example, the people who came to put out the fire were attacked with brickbats. At Sejpur, the police made a *lathi* charge upon them. At Vasana, the fire took place in the very street of the newly-appointed Mukhi, and though he himself was absent that night, his brother prevented the people getting water to pour on the flames. The peasants are not prepared to accuse anyone, but such fires have never occurred before;



A widow of Seipur, whose only
house was burnt (p. 11)



A Mandw of Sunao (p. 11)

against one another. Here is a vivid story from a Baria of Bochasan. "A short, stunted-looking official in a big hat came to our street with 10 policemen one morning in the month of Ashwin. We were sitting in our Mata Temple. He put as. 2 as an offering, bowed to the Goddess, and began to talk. He said, You must now make it a point not to pay any of your debts to the Patidars. You shall take all the Patidar lands in auction, and for a *bigha* you shall give one-eighth of a maund of Kodra. (Kodra is Re. 1 a maund) You may take away their crops. I am on your side. We replied, We cannot do that, for we are living as brothers in the village. Another day I went to Borsad, and the officials asked me to buy some of the cheap land that was being sold. The Mamlatdar offered me a rupee out of his own pocket saying, 'Now you can give this rupee as earnest money for the value of the lands I offer you'. But I refused."

From the village of Dabasi comes a similar story. The rich lands of the Patidars were offered to the Barias at a rupee an acre. At Ras, there has been a lot of this sort of propaganda. A Circle Inspector was actually overheard urging the Barias to go to the tents of the migrants and set fire to them. At Vadadha, I was told (and a whole roomful of men confirmed the story) that the Mamlatdar of Borsad declared, "This is just the time to suck the Patidars' blood, to plunder them and disown any debts, and get their property."

At a time when India's divisions are made so strong an argument against her self-government, we cannot protest too emphatically against any attempts to accentuate these divisions.

The Migration,

Borsad Taluka intermingles at every point with the Baroda State. In 1818 after the conquest of the Peshwas, the British and Gaekwad officials accomplished, a *Phul-gunthani* division of the territory; like the petals of torn flowers the different sections overlap. The district, therefore, is peculiarly favourable for a migration. We visited

a great number of deserted villages. At Sejjpur, I looked across the fields of green tobacco plants, at the white walls and red-brown roofs, framed in sheltering trees, of the fine houses of the Patidars with their carved pillars and doors, and quaint interesting mural paintings. From these beautiful houses the villagers have gone out to brave wind and weather in the *Mandwas*.^{*} I asked again and again about the hardships in these places, but was invariably met with the reply that in the country's cause, such hardships were of small account. The spirit of the migrants is epitomised in a text I saw hanging in one of the tents:—

“A coward has no home in Gujarat”

The camps are clean and well-ordered. They are like the head-quarters of an army on the march. But you could feel the atmosphere of strain. At any moment houses in the deserted villages may be burnt, crops or land irretrievably lost, or there may be a raid at night by the police.

Conclusion.

I write these words on Christmas Eve. On December 24th, over 1500 years ago, a Christian monk named Telemachus left his peaceful cell and went to Rome to protest against the brutal gladiatorial shows held in the Coliseum. The people, maddened at his action, stoned him to death, but the Emperor, moved by his heroic sacrifice, decreed that the shows should never again be held. As evening fell, Telemachus lay dying in the lap of a Brother. “Is it peace?” he cried, “Oh, my brother, is it peace? Peace on earth, good will to men”. And so he died.

Is it too much to hope, too daring a prayer, that Government should hear the message of Christmas peace and love? No one asks Government to give in to the Satyagrahis, but we do ask that in this non-violent war the rules of the game should be observed. I do ask that both sides should, in the great words of J. H. Newman, “always behave to their enemies, as if they were one day to be their friends.”

^{*} Temporary huts erected by the emigrants.

The Talukas of Bardoli & Jalalpur

THE Talukas of Bardoli and Jalalpur present an interesting contrast to the district of Kaira. If Kaira possesses an unenviable reputation for dacoities, Surat has been famed for the drinking of liquor. We shall see shortly that just as the influence of Mahatma Gandhi has weaned Kaira from violence, it is turning Surat from drunk. The southern villages of Gujarat are smaller, and the houses, though comfortable enough, are less elaborately decorated. In the west the country is fertile, but in the east of Bardoli, we travelled across large tracts of poor and unproductive land. The population is somewhat differently distributed. Over half of it is composed of 'Raniparaj' or 'forest-dwellers', a backward community which has been making much progress recently under the influence of devoted social workers. There is a certain width of outlook about the people, due to their connection with South Africa and, in the case of the Kolis, to their travels to New Zealand and the East Coast of Africa. One quality they share with all other Gujaratis: they are among the most attractive people in the world, hospitable, simple, industrious, and courageous.

Bardoli is permeated by the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1921-1922 his emissaries started promulgating his ideas among the people. In 1928 those ideas carried the peasants through months of suffering to victory. To-day, they are being tested as never before. In 1928, great leaders went at liberty among the villages. To-day Gujarat is leaderless. We should not, therefore, be surprised, however much we may be grieved, at the fact, that under strong provocation, there have been one or two cases of violence on the part of the peasants. These would not have occurred if their leaders had been on the spot.

On the whole, however, conditions in Bardoli and Jalalpur compare favourably with those at Harsad. This is partly due to the fact that the collection of revenue has not

been antedated. The Collector of Surat is a more intelligent and sympathetic man than the Collector of Kaira. In Borsad our hearts were wrung by constant stories of police atrocities, in Bardoli we were rather inspired by the courage of the people and the vision and devotion of the Congress workers. Borsad presents the picture of a persecution: Bardoli of a well-organised campaign.

There are, however, I regret to say, a number of examples of police *zulam* which I am bound to mention. The personnel of the Kitchener police should be thoroughly overhauled, and a sharp watch kept on their conduct by their superior officers. I heard a number of stories of their loose habits and their drinking propensities. At Sarbhon, they abused the women pickets. At Vedchhi, they behaved so badly to the women of the village that the whole population of Raniparaj migrated. At Kurel we heard how a Police Jamadar of Bardoli entered Baroda territory, and beat three Gaekwad subjects and snatched away some papers from a Baroda Talati. It was a police raid and indiscriminate beating of non-khatedars that caused the inhabitants of Vaghaj and Afwa to leave British India. I met an old Satyagrahi of South Africa, who owned no property and was not liable for tax, who was beaten in Baroda territory by British police. Haripura has been raided by the police, and even those who had paid their dues were beaten and abused. The extraordinary case of illegal confiscation in Tarsadi village, where 100 buffaloes were taken and sold at Rs. 5 apiece on behalf, not of their owners, but of the whole village, has already been reported by Sir Lalubhai Samaldas. I heard several stories of false charges that have been put up against the Satyagrahis. But, on the whole, the repression is not nearly so heavy as in the Northern Talukas.

On the other hand, it seemed to me that the *Mandwa* camps involved greater hardships for the peasants. In Bardoli, they are not usually away in the fields, but the migrants live in temporary sheds at the back of existing houses. Sometimes two or three families will be crowded into the house of a hospitable Baroda villager. Once I sat



A poor peasant of Joshikuva who was severely beaten by the Mamlatdar of Borsad in Baroda Territory (p. 11)



Divan Bahadur H. D. Desai, Sjt. Amritlal Thakkar, Prof. Kumarappa, Dr. Manilal Patel, Fr. Elwin, Brother Shamrao and others, standing in a burnt house at Vasana (p. 11)

in a huge barn which was choc-a-bloc with the most extraordinary medley of household goods that I have ever seen. Often the *Mandwas* are very poorly built : they offer no privacy, and they are greatly overcrowded.

The numbers of migrants has been exaggerated. Not more than 30,000 can have left British India. Yet even this number, which includes practically all those who are liable to pay land revenue, is surely of extraordinary significance. The long chain of empty villages, the deserted streets in which the voices of the visitors echo eerily, the unvisited temples, the unfrequented wells, are a more vocal expression of the real desire of the Indian people than a thousand speeches could ever be. You can never forget the voices of these silent villages.

I had some interesting conversations with the migrants.

"Why have you left your villages?" I asked them again and again.

"Because of the police *sulam*" was the invariable reply.

"Did you migrate under the persuasion of the Congress workers?"

"No, we came of our own accord to win Swaraj."

"Do you feel bitter towards the British Raj?" I asked.

"This is not the British Raj as we have known it. The Raj should protect us, but this Raj believes only in illegality and beating. In old times, the Raj would not raise even a stick. But this Raj has abandoned its duty of protection."

"Do you believe in the power of non-violence to win Swaraj?"

"Certainly, it is only due to non-violence that we are not crushed. Because we have the repression and made no retaliation, we are saved."

"Do you believe your cause to be righteous?"

"Of course. Gandhiji and the Nehrus have sacrificed everything for us. They have sought neither money nor fame. We must stand by them."

"How long can your strength last?"

"We shall resist to the very end."

"What will happen to you in the rains?"

"God will take care of us when the time comes."

Truly, whatever one thinks of the cause for which these peasants are fighting, their spirit is wonderful. I was totally unable to get a grumble out of them. They are men inspired, not only by the saintly character of Mahatma Gandhi, but also by the splendid, virile, heroic and cheery figure of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. They have the real spirit of Ahimsa. I listened to a speech on Love by an ex-Deputy Collector who had, after twenty-six years of loyal service, resigned his post as a protest against the police atrocities, thereby forfeiting his pension. I heard an old man in one of the camps declare. "In ancient days, our *Bhaktas* had Faith in God, and saw Him face to face. We must have a faith like theirs. For everything depends on God."

A Police-lock-up

On our arrival at Navsari, we were met by Mr. Ramdas Gandhi and while I was talking to him, in the very middle of a sentence, he was arrested. He went to the jail with the cheer and bearing of a prince. The next I saw of him was in the Jalalpur lock-up. There, in a dark hole, unlighted, unfurnished, he was sitting behind the bars peering out into the welcome light. That even criminals, let alone *men of culture and education, could be treated worse than animals in a zoo, would be a disgrace even to an uncivilised Government.*

Social Work

Hardoli and Jalalpur present a most attractive picture of the positive and constructive work of Indian Nationalism. There are five large Ashrams in Bardoli which have been conducting social work. From each of them, there go out devoted missionaries, who try to persuade the people to give up drink, who educate and enlighten the backward classes, and who teach spinning and weaving. All of these are now in the hands of the police. A poor Raniparaj

peasant said to us: "What a shame to confiscate our Ashram which was helping us in every way! Now instead we have to support ten police men who molest our women." There has been a complete transformation of the Raniparaj as a result of the work of these Ashrams.

Other communities have also benefitted. I visited the Antiaj Ashram at Navsari, which is supported by the Congress, and saw the splendid work that is being done there for Dheds, Chamars and others. On my last day in Gujarat, I attended a meeting of the Dhangis, whom the Congress workers are educating. Nothing can be more beneficial to the depressed classes than the anti-drink campaign, which is being vigorously pursued throughout the district. I saw many fields in which the toddy palms have been cut down, and met a number of ladies who were carrying on this difficult campaign.

Rigid caste exclusiveness is being broken down by the Movement, and a truly democratic spirit is being fostered by the uniform use of the simple Khadi shirt and *dhoti*. In one village a Patidar, a goldsmith, and a barber have all taken refuge in the house of a potter. One day we took our meals in a Mahadev Temple. Our party consisted of a Brahmin, a Patidar, a Bania, a Christian and our Mahomedan motor-driver.

Although the Patidars have been most influenced by the Movement, no community, except the Dublas, remains untouched by it. I met a number of Moslem students from a local Theological College who had taken up national service. No fewer than 49 Brahmin families have left the village of Supa. The Raniparaj are largely in the movement, but they have not migrated, since the Banias, to whom they generally owe money, have made a practice of paying the revenue on their behalf. The Kolis are very strongly Swarajists and have done a great deal to abolish the liquor trade in their villages. From Karadi, ten families of Dheds have emigrated, rather than submit to police molestation.

I have reserved the Dublas for a special paragraph. There are some 30,000 Dublas in the Bardoli Taluka, and

they are practically 'serfs. They get into debt to their masters, and they have to repay their debts by work which lasts a life-time. Though legally free, they are not supposed to change their masters, and their spirit has become completely crushed. We talked with some of them, and I have seldom seen a more pitiable sight than these serfs, in a bondage far stronger and more degrading than that which the British Raj imposes on their masters. No one has insisted more strongly than Mahatma Gandhi that the condition of freedom is a free spirit. Whatever hardships may be endured by the migrant Patidars they are nothing when compared to the sufferings of the Dublas, their slaves. It is only fair to say that many of the local leaders are aware of this blot on the fair name of Bardoli. It is not easy to help the Dublas. Their rigid caste exclusiveness and their drinking habits make them inaccessible to all but the most devoted. But it is just this devotion and self-sacrifice that is now demanded from national workers. In a movement based on idealism and soul-force, it is vital to remove such evils as these. I would most earnestly appeal for many young men and women to come forward and try to remove the wrongs under which these and other communities are still labouring.

On the purely humanitarian side, therefore, Bardoli presents a challenge to both the Government and the Congress. It appeals to national workers to extend and intensify the splendid beginning of social work that has been made. It equally appeals to Government to foster and not to hinder the purely social work even of a political movement. Surely it would be possible for the Ashrams, now occupied by the police, to be restored for the purposes of social service.

I have been deeply moved by what I saw in Gujarat. I fully realise that Government is bound in its own interests to take steps to counter this movement. No one can question that. But surely it is possible to meet even such an emergency as this by methods which are true to the principles of Law and Justice, Righteousness and Humanity, and not by those which betray them.

I would urge on all my fellow-Christians who read these pages, not least on any English Government servants, if they it have the good fortune to meet their eye, that the principles of Christ apply equally to public and private life, that what is wrong for an individual is wrong also for the State, that if it is sinful for a private citizen to be brutal, callous, or unfair, it is also sinful for an official to do these things. If the higher officials of Gujarat would take a fearless stand against all that is morally questionable in the Government campaign against the Satyagrahis, if they would insist on the minor officials and the police behaving in a human and decent manner, if they would put all they know of the principles of Christ into the conduct of public affairs in Gujarat, then whatever the issue of the present struggle may be, they would have preserved intact the authority of Law, the sanctity of Justice, and left behind no heritage of bitter memories.

Printed by M. N. Kulkarni at the Karnatak Printing Press,
318A, Thakurdwar, Bombay and published by
Chimanlal J. Shah, 12, Walkeshwar Road,
Bombay

By FATHER ELWIN

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